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200 inspect CIA job possibilities

By Brian Coffey-Weber
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Much more than a pleasant drive on the interstate separates Colorado Springs and Boulder.

For instance, when the CIA seeks to recruit the best and the brightest at the University of Colorado at Boulder, it encounters protesters and ridicule.

In Colorado Springs, almost 200 people showed up to greet two CIA recruiters Friday — not to demonstrate but to apply.

"The response has been tremendous," one personnel official said as he apologized for running out of chairs in a standing-room-only crowd in a meeting room at the Clarion Hotel.

At least half of those who sat through an hour and half afternoon presentation stayed on to take preliminary exams that may lead to a job with the U.S. spy agency. The Non-Commissioned Officers Association Job Fair also was held at the hotel Friday.

The CIA came looking for telecommunications specialists and electronics technicians. It found many, and no protesters.

Like any other international company, the intelligence organization detailed for prospective employees what the agency represents and vaguely what it does, its expectations of employees, career development opportunities, pay and benefits.

To illustrate its job — "other than James Bond," said person-

nel manager Bill Cunius — a video film explained the agency safeguards freedom and acts "like a think tank to acquire knowledge and truth."

Much of that is accomplished by "promising and accomplished professionals" in more than 125 disciplines around the world, the tape emphasized.

Not surprisingly, applicants endure a rigorous security clearance process, Cunius said. It includes a check of medical history and current physical condition, lie-detector tests to determine whether applicants use drugs, past criminal activity, and a check on a person's "general lifestyle."

"We want people who just sort of blend in," Cunius said. "Sex-

ual deviations is an area we look at. We don't want a male who likes walking around in female clothes."

Polygraph tests "will definitely determine" drug use and other unacceptable activities, Cunius said. The tests are administered throughout a career.

CIA hopefuls must exhibit the ability to handle their finances to avoid vulnerability to blackmail, he said.

Technicians and telecommunications people start at \$19,740 and \$18,544, respectively. A recently adopted pay plan — based strictly on performance, not office politics, Cunius stressed — rapidly increases salaries well into the \$20,000 range.